

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims in order to further clarify various aspects of the present invention. Specifically, claims 1, 9 and 17, the sole independent claims in the application, have been amended to delete recitation that the cassette table is for mounting "in air" the cassette, and to recite instead that the cassette table is for mounting the cassette at a position of which an upper region thereof is open to a cassette transferring path. In connection with these amended independent claims 1, 9 and 17, note, for example, Figs. 1 and 2, showing cassette 1a on the cassette table 2a, with the position at which cassette 1a is mounted being open to, e.g., the cassette transfer path (including, for example, the transfer robot shown in Fig. 1 and tracks shown in Fig. 1).

The undersigned particularly directs attention to U.S. Patent No. 4,851,101 to Hutchinson, cited on page 2 of the Form PTO-1449 (equivalent) submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement Under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 filed July 12, 2000, in the above-identified application. It is respectfully submitted that, particularly as presently amended, U.S. Patent No. 4,851,101, either alone or in combination with the teachings of other references of record, would have neither disclosed nor would have suggested the presently claimed subject matter, including, inter alia, the cassette table for mounting the cassette at a position of which an upper region thereof is open to a cassette transferring path. As seen in U.S. Patent No. 4,851,101 to Hutchinson, as well as the other

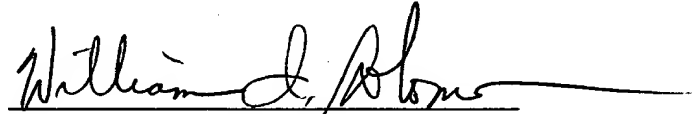
Hutchinson patent of record (U.S. Patent No. 4,715,764) and U.S. Patent No. 4,917,556 to Stark, et al., the cassette in these described structures is at a position of which an upper region is not open to the cassette transfer path.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to claims 1, 9 and 17 by the current Amendment. The marked-up version is on the attached pages of which the first page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE".

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 503.30414V17) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims presently in the application as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A method of transferring a substrate, using an atmospheric loader comprising:

(1) a single atmospheric transferring device for carrying in and carrying out, one by one, substrates between a cassette which receives plural substrates and two lock chambers;

(2) opening and closing devices, provided at said two lock chambers and being opened and closed every carrying-in said substrate to one of the two lock chambers and very carrying-out said substrate from one of the two lock chambers; and

(3) a cassette table for mounting [in air] said cassette at a position of which an upper region thereof is open to a cassette transferring path,

wherein the method [comprising] comprises the steps of:

using said single atmospheric transferring device, taking out, one by one, said substrate from said cassette which is mounted on said cassette table, at said position, and carrying in, one by one, said substrate to one of said two lock chambers; and

using said single atmospheric transferring device, taking out, one by one, said substrate from one of said two

load chambers, and carrying in said substrate to said cassette, wherein said opening and closing devices are opened and closed every carrying-in of said substrate, one by one, to one of the two lock chambers, and every carrying-out of said substrate, one by one, from one of the two lock chambers.

9. (Twice Amended) A substrate transferring apparatus comprising:

an atmospheric loader having (1) a single atmospheric transferring device for carrying in and carrying out, one by one, substrates between (a) a cassette which receives plural substrates and (b) two lock chambers,

(2) opening and closing devices, provided at said two lock chambers and being opened and closed every carrying-in said substrate to one of the two lock chambers and every carrying-out said substrate from one of the two lock chambers; and

(3) a cassette table for mounting [in air] said cassette at a position of which an upper region thereof is open to a cassette transferring path,

wherein said single atmospheric transferring device has a mechanism for carrying a substrate, one by one, to and out from said cassette which is mounted on said cassette table, at said position, and a mechanism for carrying a substrate, one by one, to and out from, said two lock chambers, and

wherein said opening and closing devices have structure causing the opening and closing devices to open and

close every carrying-in of a substrate, one by one, to one of the two lock chambers, and every carrying-out of a substrate, one by one, from one of the two lock chambers.

17. (Twice Amended) A substrate transferring apparatus comprising:

an atmospheric loader having (1) a single atmospheric transferring device for carrying in and carrying out, one by one, substrates between (a) a cassette which receives plural substrates and (b) two lock chambers, (2) opening and closing devices, provided respectively at said two lock chambers and being opened and closed every carrying-in said substrate to one of the two lock chambers and every carrying-out said substrate from one of the two lock chambers; and (3) a cassette table for mounting [in air] said cassette at a position of which an upper region thereof is open to a cassette transferring path,

wherein said single atmospheric transferring device has a mechanism for carrying in and carrying out, one by one, a substrate between said cassette which is mounted on said cassette table, at said position, and said atmospheric loader, and a mechanism for carrying in and carrying out, one by one, said substrate between said atmospheric loader and said two lock chambers, and

wherein said opening and closing devices have structure causing the opening and closing devices to open and close every carrying-in of a substrate, one by one, to one of the two lock chambers, and every carrying-out of a substrate,

one by one, from one of the two lock chambers.